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The Tariqa's Cohesional Power and the Shaykhhood Succession Question

Preface

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We present a special issue on *Tariqa* (Sufi Orders) with special reference to the succession of their leadership (shaykhhood). This edition is largely based on a panel at the Second World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies (WOCMES-2) which was held in Amman, Jordan on 11-16th June, 2006. The panel was entitled "The Logic of Succession around Sufis and Saints," and Professor AKAHORI Masayuki (Sophia University, Tokyo) and I were the co-organizers. In this panel seven papers were read and all of them dealt with the question of the "logic of succession," as a significant factor in their case studies concerning Sufism and saint veneration.

The speakers and titles were as follows;

- (1) MORIMOTO Kazuo (The University of Tokyo, Japan), "'And I Saw the Prophet in a Dream': Anecdotal Admonitions to the Believers in Manaqib-Fada'il Literature on Sayyid-Sharifs."
- (2) NAKANISHI Tatsuya (Kyoto University, Japan), "Creating the Silsila, or the Logic of Succession, in the Case of Chinese Muslims."
- (3) Alexandre PAPAS (EHESS-College de France, France), "The Succession of Naqshbandi Shaykhs in Premodern Central Asia: Controversies and Changes."
- (4) TAKAHASHI Kei (Sophia University, Japan), "Divisions within the *Tariqas* in Modern Egypt: A Case of a Conflict over the Independence of al-Habībiyya from al-Rifā'iyya (1905-1925)."
- (5) Thierry ZARCON (CNRS, France), "Shaykh Succession in Turkish Sufi Lineages (19th and 20th Centuries): Conflicts, Reforms and Transmission of Spiritual Enlightenment."
- (6) KOMAKI Sachiyo (Takasaki City University of Economics, Japan), "Politics, Poetics and Pop in the Succession of Holy Relics: Examples from South Asian Muslim Society."
- (7) AKAHORI Masayuki (Sophia University, Japan), "The Transformation of Saintliness in the Process of Succession: Saints and their Descendants in the Western Desert of Egypt."

In the past, certain anthropologists and historians discussed the question of succession by contrasting genealogy and charisma as factors that generate saint veneration among Muslims.

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However, we are of the view that there is room for further study concerning this point. For example, we need to examine and see if there is any general principle as to how the shaykhhood was succeeded to in Sufi orders. In most cases it followed the bloodline, though exceptions were abundant. Also the question of how the *ijāza* of Sufis is different from that of the '*ulamā*', remains an unsolved question of some significance. This can lead to a re-consideration of the general relationship that existed between the Sufis and the '*ulamā*'. The fact that intellectuals strongly influenced by the thought of Ibn 'Arabi belong to several different Sufi orders, forces us to reassess the question as to how intellectual succession and organizational affiliation are combined among the Sufis. Indeed, it is obvious that we have many topics to discuss in this field.

In order to stimulate such study on Sufism and saint veneration, this panel was organized with the cooperation of French and Japanese experts belonging to different fields in Middle-East and Islamic studies. For Japanese presenters, including the organizers, this panel marked an occasion to display part of the achievements of a ten-year joint research program that examines diverse cases revolving around Sufism and saint veneration, in different regions and times. Our intention in carrying out that research was to create a new inclusive framework theory concerning the complex phenomena that encompass the cultured thoughts of the Sufis, the social organization of the Tariqas, and the popular adoration of saints and descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. The participation of our French colleagues, distinguished by their long tradition of outstanding work in this field, undoubtedly served to make the panel more fruitful.

From this panel we have already edited a special issue entitled "Birth and Succession of Holiness among Sufis and Saints" in *Orient: Reports of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan*, vol. 42 (2007), which includes the revised edition of KOMAKI Sachiyo and NAKANISHI Tatsuya's papers side by side with the other three papers. If the former special issue dealt with the succession of holiness in general, this issue focuses on the succession of shaykhhood itself.

We selected three papers from the WOCMES-2 panel and added a new paper for this special issue.

The first paper which was added on this occasion but was originally read at one of the meetings of the aforementioned ten-year joint research program, "The Origins of *Ṭarīqas*" by YAJIMA Yoichi (Kyoto University of Foreign Studies), attempts to reconsider the problem of the formation of Tariqas from the following three aspects, i.e. 1) genealogy (*silsila*) and spiritual ancestors, 2) doctrine and practice, 3) organization.

Once the Tariqas are founded, the question of the succession of the leadership becomes a critical

point of interest for our study. The following three papers, arranged chronologically for their topics, respectively focus on this subject.

The second paper, “Shaykh Succession in Turkish Sufi Lineages (19th and 20th Centuries): Conflicts, Reforms and Transmission of Spiritual Enlightenment” by Thierry ZARCONÉ (CNRS, Paris), traces the history of Tariqas during the Ottoman Period. After pointing out the two principles of succession, i.e. hereditary succession and spiritual succession based on the master-disciple relationship, the author clarifies the fact that the Tariqas which stick with just one of these succession systems are quite rare and worthy of attention.

The third paper, “Shaykh Succession in the Classical Naqshbandiyya: Spirituality, Heredity and the Question of Body,” by Alexandre PAPAS (CNRS, Paris), also premised on the distinction between hereditary and spiritual succession and admitting the latter to be considered more authentic in the Naqshbandiyya Tariqa, exemplifies many cases of the former type of succession. He concludes that the hereditary logic of succession was not considered as a decline but rather it was closely connected with embodying the Muhammadan experience. Here not only the blood but also the tangibility of the body of saints (like that of Muhammad) is important.

The last and fourth paper, “A New Logic in the Sufi Organization: The Continuation and the Disintegration of the *Ṭarīqas* in Modern Egypt” by TAKAHASHI Kei (Sophia University, Japan), deals with the Egyptian Tariqa in the early 20th century. Normally the modern Egyptian Tariqas are evaluated as hierarchically well-organized because of the state control over them. He picks up the case of the independence of a sub-order from its mother-order and concludes that the state’s policy to “modernize” the Tariqas gave the leaders a new logic of succession.

Just after the WOCMES-2 ended, “NIHU (National Institutes for the Humanities) Program: Islamic Area Studies” was launched in Japan. It was inaugurated in 2006 as a five-year research project, with the prospect of a second five-year period. Under this project, The Center for Islamic Area Studies at Kyoto University (KIAS) was founded as an attachment to the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies. Unit 4 which I am organizing continues to promote studies on Tariqa as well as Sufism, Saint veneration etc. in close cooperation with Group 3 of the IAS Center at Sophia University (SIAS), whose head is Professor AKAHORI Masayuki. KIAS published the first issue of a new academic journal called *Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies* in April 2007. We also had an international workshop on Tariqa itself in October 2007, and a selection of its achievements will appear in *Kyoto Bulletin* in the near future.

In closing, I would like to add some remarks about the references. I have standardized the

method of reference for each paper in accordance with the style of this journal, although I would not be so bold as to claim this system to be the best for the philological researches. However, I have respected the styles of respective authors in the transcription of the original words.